## 85. Kimpakka Jātaka and The Fruit of Perspective

From the seduction of appearance to the silence of discernment

A journey through ancient Buddhist wisdom, Jungian psychology and the apophatic dimension

"Like the ones who ate." --This story was told by Master while he was in Jetavana, about a lustful brother. Tradition says that there was a descendant of a good family who gave his heart to the doctrine of the Buddha and joined the Brotherhood. But one day, as he was going to seek alms in Savatthi, he was there moved by the sight of a beautifully dressed woman. Having been brought before the Master by his teachers and directors, he admitted in response to the Blessed One's requests that the spirit of lust had entered into him. Then said the Master, "Verily, the five desires of the senses are sweet in the hour of true pleasure, brother; but this enjoyment of them (in so far as it involves the miseries of rebirth in hell and in other evil states) is like eating the fruit of the tree of Che-fruit. Very beautiful to look at is the Che-frutto, very fragrant and sweet; but when it is eaten, it shakes the inside and brings death. On other days, out of ignorance of its evil nature, a multitude of men, seduced by the beauty, perfume, and sweetness of the fruit, ate it so as to die." With that, he told this story from the past.

Once upon a time, when Brahmadatta reigned in Benares, the Bodhisatta came to life as the leader of a caravan. Once, traveling with five hundred wagons from East to West, he arrived at the edge of a forest. Gathering his men, he said to them: --"In this forest grow trees that bear poisonous fruit. Let no one eat unknown fruit without first asking me." When they had crossed the forest, they came to the other border on a Che-fruit tree with branches bending with their load of fruit. In shape, smell and taste, its trunk, branches, leaves and fruits resembled a mango. Taking the tree, from its misleading appearance and so on, a mango, some gathered the fruit and ate; but others said, "Let's talk to our leader before we eat." And these, gathering the fruit, waited for him to go up. When he arrived, he ordered them to throw away the harvested fruit and had an emetic administered to those who had already eaten. Of the latter, some recovered; but those who

had been the first to eat died. The Bodhisatta reached his destination safely and sold his goods at a profit, after which he returned home. After a life spent in charity and other good works, he died to live according to his desserts.

It was when he told this story, that the Master, as Buddha, uttered this verse:

As those who ate the Fruit died, so He desired,

When ripe, kill the one who knows no pain

From now on they reproduce, they stoop to lustful actions.

Having thus shown that Lusts, so sweet in the hour of fruit, end by killing their devotees, the Master preached the Four Truths, at the end of which the lustful Brother was converted and conquered the Fruit of the First Way. Among the other followers of the Buddha, some won the First, others the Second, others the Third Way, while others returned to being Arahats.

At the end of the lesson, the Master identified the Birth by saying, "My disciples were the people of the caravan in those days, and I was the leader of them."

Here is a reworking that brings the story closer to the spirit of the Kimpakka Jātaka. I have eliminated some elements that are too explicitly allegorical (such as Unemployment and Inflation personified) to replace them with more universal symbols, so that the story can be read simultaneously as history, Jungian psychological process and spiritual parable. I have also accentuated the apophatic dimension: the truth is not fully explained, but allowed to emerge through images and silences.

## The Fruit of Perspective

### *I. The Glass Forest*

Marco Tarenti was a man who had learned to recognize the value of things by the number of hands that applauded them.

All his life he had believed that success consisted in uniting what seemed opposite. Art and industry. Ethics and profit. Spirituality and marketing. Every contradiction appeared to him as a staircase to a higher floor.

To this end, he worked in the Tower of Prosperity, a black glass building that dominated the city like a gigantic tree born from asphalt.

Every morning he crossed the hall without ever raising his eyes to the top.

Up there, almost invisible in the light, a figure with a top hat held his arms open as if to welcome the world.

From a distance it seemed to offer freedom. Up close it would have been discovered that he was clutching chains.

Marco never looked long enough.

## *II. The Threshold Keeper*

The only presence that seemed to belong to a different time was Elias, the old caretaker. He slowly wiped the floor with a worn broom. He seemed to know every crack in the marble as one knows the face of an old friend.

One morning she touched his wrist.

"Trees grow in this city that no one sees."

Marco smiled absently.

"I don't see any trees."

"That's why they're dangerous."

The old man continued:

"They bear fruit that has the color of ripe mangoes. They smell of recognition. They taste like happiness. Those who taste them believe they have become older. Only later does he discover that the poison was not in the fruit, but in the desire with which he ate it."

Marco laughed.

"If it were true, you would be in my place today."

And he continued towards the elevators.

Elias said nothing more.

Real warnings don't chase anyone.

## *III. The Perfect Fruit*

Many months later the summons arrived. Ninety-ninth floor. Council Chamber. On the long mahogany table, protected by a crystal bell, there was a single cake. It was not a work of art. It seemed like the memory of something that everyone wanted without ever having seen it. Its scent was that of a freshly picked mango. The president smiled.

"We have finally found the formula for happiness."

No one applauded. There was no need. Marco slowly raised the bell. For a moment the caretaker's voice came back to him. Then the desire spoke louder. He bit into the fruit.

## *IV. The Invisible Poison*

At first nothing happened. On the contrary. Everything seemed clearer. The walls were shining. People were smiling. The numbers flowed perfectly on the screens.

Then something changed.

The handshakes hanging from the paintings slowly began to transform. Each hand squeezed the other with excessive force. Collaboration became possession. Trust became control. Help became addiction. Marco felt that the building was breathing. Not upwards. Downwards. As if each floor was supported by something that did not want to be seen. The elevators began to shake. Reflections appeared from the glass that belonged to no one. Each elegant face showed, just below the surface, a hungry expression.

It was not the world that was deformed. It was the gaze.

### *V. The Nameless Shadow*

Marco ran out of the room. He went down the stairs. Each floor seemed longer than the last. When he reached the entrance he found Elias. The old man held in his hand a small glass filled with a dark liquid.

"Drink it."

"What is it?"

"What it gives back."

Marco hesitated.

"Give back what?"

"What you've always tried not to see."

He drank. The taste was bitter. The body contracted. He fell to his knees. A black, viscous, formless substance seemed to come out of his chest. It was not the fruit. It was something much older. When the tremor stopped, Marco slowly looked up at a glass wall. The reflection no longer showed the impeccable manager. It didn't even show a monster. It showed a constantly changing being. Sometimes a frightened child. Sometimes a predator. Sometimes a beggar. Sometimes a king.

Each image tried to impose itself as its true identity. Then it vanished.

Marco understood that he had spent his entire life defending masks that constantly changed their faces. The Shadow was not a hidden creature. He was the one he had called "I."

### *VI. The Foundation*

The Tower began to crack. Not from above. From below. Its foundations were not made of concrete. They were made of desires that had never been questioned. Of fears transformed into ambition. Of voids disguised as success. Every crack had arisen long before the building. Marco observed the collapse without fleeing. For the first time he was not looking for a way out.

### *VII. Silence beyond the fruit*

"Am I cured?" he asked.

Elias remained silent. Then he only said:

"Those who want to be cured are still looking for someone to save."

Marco looked at the point where the Tower stood just before. Now there was only room. No peak. No ruins. Not even a victory. Just an opening.

The old man slowly resumed sweeping the floor, as if nothing had happened.

Marco then understood what the caretaker had never tried to explain to him. The fruit was not poisonous because it deceived the senses. It was poisonous because it promised an identity. Freedom did not consist in choosing the right fruit. It consisted of no longer needing to eat any of them. And when even this last thought fell, only a nameless silence remained.

For the first time in his life, Marco felt neither hunger nor satiety. There was simply no one left to be fed.

## Introduction

We live in a time when almost everything is designed to appear desirable.

Images seduce even before being understood. Words promise happiness even before they are heard. Ideas seek consensus even before they are meditated. Even spirituality sometimes risks turning into a product to be consumed quickly, an experience to be collected or an identity to be exhibited.

The ancient Buddhist tradition already knew this danger.

Many centuries ago, the Kimpakka Jātaka, the eighty-fifth story in the Jātaka collection, told of a group of travelers passing through a forest. On the way they met trees laden with fruits identical to ripe mangoes: the color was perfect, the scent inviting, the taste sweet. Their leader warned them: those fruits were poisonous.

Some listened. Others trusted their senses.

The story ends with a lesson as simple as it is radical: what appears nourishing can be deadly when desire takes the place of discernment.

But does this parable really belong only to the past?

Or does it continue to speak to our present, where the "perfect fruit" takes on ever new forms: success, prestige, power, image, consumption, technology, even spiritual research?

From this question comes the project that the reader is about to explore.

The video combines two narratives.

The first is the Kimpakka Jātaka, presented in its symbolic essentiality.

The second is The Fruit of Perspective, a story set in the contemporary world that translates the ancient parable into the language of our time. The protagonist, Marco Tarenti, lives inside the Tower of Prosperity, convinced that happiness coincides with success. When the "perfect fruit" is offered to him, everything that seemed stable slowly begins to dissolve.

The intent is not to modernize Buddhism. It is to show how an authentic symbol never belongs exclusively to the era in which it was born. A symbol continues to live because it continues to transform those who contemplate it. For this reason, the proposed path is not limited to Buddhist reading.

Alongside the Jātaka two further perspectives develop.

The first is that of Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology, in which the poisonous fruit becomes the image of the inflation of the Ego, of the Person who identifies with success and of the Shadow that emerges when the illusion can no longer be sustained.

The second is the apophatic dimension, common to many great contemplative traditions. Here the symbol is not definitively explained, but guarded. Its meaning is not to offer an answer, but to open a space of silence in which the reader can observe his or her relationship with desire, identity and the need to possess what appears perfect.

The path he follows is not intended to convince. He wants to accompany. First through an image. Then through a story. Finally, through a question that everyone will have to ask themselves.

## The cover: a threshold, not an illustration

Before the video even starts, the reader meets the cover. It is not a simple introductory image. It is a threshold.

As in ancient Buddhist depictions, each visual element has a narrative, psychological, and contemplative function at the same time.

The image shows an immense tree growing on the border between two worlds. On one side there is a primordial forest, a symbol of original nature, of life not yet fragmented by ambition and the illusion of control. On the other rises a metropolis dominated by black glass towers. It is the landscape of contemporary man: efficient, bright, technologically sophisticated and, precisely for this reason, often unable to distinguish authentic value from the simple glitter of appearance.

The tree does not belong completely to either world. Its roots seem to feed on the forest, while its branches reach out towards the city.

It is the symbol of existence itself: a reality that precedes every culture and every era, but which continues to offer the human being the same possibility of choice.

Golden fruits hang from the branches. They are splendid. Perfect. Impossible to distinguish from ripe mangoes. Their beauty is not fake. And this is precisely the decisive point. The Kimpakka Jātaka does not teach that evil is bad. It teaches something much more subtle: poison can take the form of beauty.

Contemporary men and women move around the tree: managers, professionals, entrepreneurs, influencers, workers. They are not represented as sinners. They are simply fascinated. Their hands reach out to the fruit with that naturalness with which every human being tends towards what promises happiness.

Not far away, almost hidden, an old caretaker appears with a simple broom. He is an easily overlooked figure. And precisely for this reason it represents wisdom.

In the Buddhist tradition, as in Jungian psychology, the true teacher rarely takes center stage. It does not seduce. It does not impose. It is not convincing. He waits.

Finally, slightly separated from the others, a traveler observes without grasping. It is not yet illuminated. He has not yet reached any destination. He simply suspended the gesture. And it is perhaps precisely here that discernment is born. Not in possessing. Not in refusal. But in looking before choosing.

Finally, the horizon of the image does not end in the sky. It progressively dissolves into boundless white light. That light does not represent a paradise. It does not even represent Nirvana. Rather, it represents what every authentic contemplative tradition respectfully guards: the Mystery that no symbol can exhaust.

The cover, therefore, does not anticipate the meaning of the video. It protects him. Like the Kimpakka tree, it guards its fruit. Just as silence guards every authentic awakening.

## The Kimpakka Jātaka: when beauty becomes a test

Every great spiritual story begins with a journey. Not with a theory. Not with a doctrine. Not with an explanation.

The Kimpakka Jātaka opens with a group of travelers crossing a forest. We do not know their names, their personal history or their character. And it is precisely this absence of details that makes the story universal. They represent every human being when faced with a choice.

The forest is the world. Travel is life. Wisdom is the guide. And the fruit is everything that promises to immediately fulfill our desire.

Even before the poison enters the body, the Buddha focuses his attention on another element: the gaze. Travelers see the fruit. They observe him. They perceive its color. They breathe in its scent. They recognize it as something familiar. Their minds quickly conclude:

"It's a mango."

And this is precisely where the error arises. Not in the gesture of eating. But in the judgment that precedes the gesture. The fruit is not known. It is simply identified. Appearance takes the place of discernment.

## The Fruit That Imitates the Truth

The Buddha could have chosen a venomous snake. Or a ferocious animal. Or a plant covered with thorns. It doesn't. He chooses a fruit. And not just any fruit. A fruit that perfectly resembles one of the sweetest and most desirable. This choice reveals a profound insight into the nature of illusion. Evil rarely presents itself as evil. Error almost never manifests itself as error. The deception does not announce itself. Imitate. It takes on the face of what we already love. The Kimpakka does not seduce through fear. Seduce through trust.

For this reason, the story retains a surprising topicality. In the twenty-first century, the fruit takes on new forms. It can be professional success when it becomes a measure of one's worth. It can be the consensus sought in social media. It can be money transformed into identity. It can be technology when it promises to eliminate all human limitations. It can even be spirituality when it is transformed into an image to be exhibited instead of a transformative practice.

Every age produces its own fruits. But the mechanism remains identical. We do not desire things for what they are. We desire them for what we imagine they can make us.

## The guide that does not force

One of the most striking aspects of the Kimpakka Jātaka is the driving behavior. It knows the danger. He knows that the fruit is poisonous. It could prohibit its consumption. It could impose its authority. It could even destroy the tree. It does none of this. He warns. Then let each one choose.

This is one of the most profound characteristics of Buddhist pedagogy. Wisdom never replaces freedom. The Bodhisatta does not desire obedient disciples. He wants human beings who can see. Discernment cannot be delegated. It can only be exercised. And it is precisely for this reason that the story keeps its educational power intact. Each reader is in the position of the wayfarers. No one can eat or refuse the fruit in its place.

## The symbol according to Jung

If we read the Kimpakka Jātaka through the lens of analytical psychology, the fruit takes on an even deeper meaning.

For Jung, the psyche is not simply attracted to what is pleasant. She is attracted above all by what promises completeness. Every time the Ego encounters an image capable of filling its sense of insufficiency, a fascination arises. It is the moment in which the Person begins to identify with a role, with a success, with an ideal or with an image of perfection. The fruit of the Kimpakka represents precisely this promise.

"If you belong to me, I will finally be complete."

But ego inflation has a paradoxical characteristic. The more he seeks completeness on the outside, the further he moves away from his own center. The Shadow grows just as the Person feels victorious. For this reason, the poison does not act immediately. At first it produces pleasure. Then absorption. Finally, addiction. Pain comes only when the illusion becomes unbearable.

The Buddha and Jung speak different languages. Yet they describe the same movement. Attachment.

## Discernment as a practice of the gaze

We are used to thinking that discernment means distinguishing good from evil. The Kimpakka Jātaka suggests something much more subtle. Discernment means learning to observe desire even before the desired object. Because the fruit is constantly changing.

Today it can be prestige. Tomorrow power. The day after tomorrow security. The mind will always continue to produce new perfect mangoes. True transformation does not therefore consist in changing objects. It consists in transforming the gaze.

It is significant that the Bodhisatta does not ask wayfarers to hate the fruit. He only asks to recognize him. Discernment does not come from rejection. It comes from clarity.

## Beyond the symbol: the way of silence

It is here that the story reaches its most unexpected depth.

The apophatic tradition teaches that every authentic symbol is a window, not a destination. If we stop at the symbol, we build another idolatry. If, on the other hand, we pass through the symbol, it leads us to that which cannot be possessed. The Kimpakka does not simply invite you to avoid a fruit. It invites us to observe that inner movement that transforms every experience into an object to be grasped.

When this observation becomes stable, something changes. The fruit remains on the tree. Its beauty remains intact. The scent continues to waft through the air. But desire slowly loses its urgency. Not because it has been repressed. Because it has been understood.

This is the threshold on which the Kimpakka Jātaka accompanies the reader. A threshold that does not yet lead to awakening. It leads, rather, to the possibility of awakening. Because every authentic spiritual journey begins the moment we learn to pause in front of appearances without being immediately captured by it.

And this is precisely the path that the video develops in its images. Ancient history becomes a contemporary landscape. The forest turns into the city. The fruit takes on the face of success. The guide becomes the caretaker. And the journey continues within each of us.

## The Fruit of Perspective: When Kimpakka Spans the 21st Century

Each authentic symbol has a striking characteristic. It never belongs completely to the time in which it was born. It continues to live because it continues to transform. The Kimpakka Jātaka has not survived for over two millennia simply because it has been handed down. It has survived because each age has been able to recognize, in different forms, the same fruit. Today, that fruit no longer grows in a forest. It grows in places where human desire is organized, multiplied and refined.

For this reason, The Fruit of Perspective does not simply transport the Buddhist tale into a modern setting. He is looking for its symbolic equivalent. The forest becomes the metropolis. The tree becomes the Tower of Prosperity. The guide becomes an elderly caretaker. The poison becomes invisible. And the journey continues.

## The Tower of Prosperity

The choice of the Tower is not accidental. Throughout the history of mankind, towers have always represented a vertical ambition. The Tower of Babel. The ziggurats. The pyramids. The bell towers. Skyscrapers. Each tower tells of the human desire to climb, dominate, see further.

The Tower of Prosperity collects all these images and translates them into the language of our time. It is constructed of black glass. Glass reflects. But it does not easily show what the structure supports. This is the first great metaphor of the story. Our identity also often works like this. It shows a perfectly polished surface. It hides its foundations. The Person, Jung would say, is necessary. But it becomes dangerous when it forgets that it is only a surface.

## Marco Tarenti: a man without fault

One of the most important aspects of the story is that Marco is not an antagonist. It is not corrupt. It is not cruel. He is not morally worse than the others. He is simply a man perfectly adapted to his time. He learned what everyone taught him. That growing up means going up. What worth it means to succeed. That being recognized means being happy. For this reason, the reader can recognize himself in him. If Marco were an evil character, the story would become a moral fable. Instead it is a parable. The protagonist does not represent the sinner. It represents the ordinary human being. And it is precisely this normality that makes the story disturbing. The Kimpakka does not seduce exceptional men. It seduces everyone.

## Elias: the master that no one notices

In Jātaka the guide accompanies the group through the forest. In the contemporary story she takes on the face of Elias. The choice to make him a simple custodian is not narrative. It is symbolic. Wisdom, in the great spiritual traditions, almost always comes in disguise. Moses meets God in the desert. The Buddha sits under a tree. Zen masters work in the fields. In the Gospel parables, the Kingdom appears as a seed. Jung discovers the Self through images that consciousness considers insignificant. The caretaker belongs to the same family of symbols. No one pays attention to him. And precisely for this reason he sees what others ignore. His broom is equally significant. It is not a weapon. It is not a scepter. It is not a book. It is a tool that removes what settles slowly. Every day. Every hour. Every moment. This is also how discernment works. He does not build. Cleans.

## The fruit of modernity

When Marco reaches the ninety-ninth floor, he is offered a fruit. But it is no longer just a mango. It is a perfect dessert. A refined creation. An aesthetic promise. This transformation is fundamental. The contemporary world rarely offers desire in its natural form. It packs it. He designs it. It makes him irresistible. Advertising. Marketing. Algorithms. Digital platforms. Entertainment. Even information. Everything seems to be built to anticipate our desire even before it emerges. The Kimpakka today does not grow spontaneously. It is designed. And this is precisely its strength. The more sophisticated it becomes, the less poisonous it appears.

## The invisible poison

In the story, change does not happen immediately. Marco continues to see the same corridors. The same colleagues. The same offices. But something cracks. Handshakes become fights. The walls breathe. Reflexes stop obeying. These images do not describe a hallucination. They describe a revelation. External reality changes because the structure of the gaze has changed.

Here the story is deeply close to Jungian psychology. The Shadow does not invade the world. It makes visible what was already there. Poison does not create a new reality. It suspends the illusion of the previous one.

## The collapse that saves

Every authentic myth has a moment of crisis. It is the point at which the protagonist loses everything he considered essential. Marco loses his image. Your own safety. Your position. Even his own face. At first glance it seems like a catastrophe. In reality it is a birth.

The Kimpakka Jātaka teaches that poison can be expelled. The contemporary story adds something. It shows that what is expelled is not just the fruit. It is the identity built around it. Marco does not discover a new mask. He discovers that he has lived inside a mask. This difference is decisive. Many spiritual accounts replace a negative identity with a positive one. Something else happens here. Every identity is progressively lightened. The protagonist does not become someone better. He becomes someone less heavy.

## The myth continues

When the Tower of Prosperity disappears, the reader may expect a conclusion. The story, however, stops. He doesn't explain. He does not conclude. It does not offer a definitive moral. This open ending is not an aesthetic choice. It is a spiritual choice.

The ancient Kimpakka Jātaka ends with the recovery of those who have been able to expel the poison. The contemporary myth takes a further step. He leaves the protagonist in front of an empty space. No longer dominated by hunger. Not yet occupied by new certainties. It is a deeply apophatic ending. Because it suggests that awakening is not about finally finding the right fruit. It consists in no longer seeking in the fruit what only the conscience can recognize. And it is precisely at this point that the story returns to its ancient model. Kimpakka is not a thing of the past. It continues to grow. Not in the forest. Within our ability to confuse what appears desirable with what really leads to freedom.

## Towards a single hermeneutic of the symbol

For many readers, Buddhism, Jungian psychology, and the apophatic tradition belong to completely separate worlds. The first seems to be a religious path. The second is a psychological theory. The third is a form of Christian mysticism.

Yet, when we look at the Kimpakka Jātaka in its deepest structure, something surprising emerges. All three perspectives describe the same dynamic. Words change. The movement does not change.

## First movement: The rise of fascination

In the Jātaka the fruit appears. In Jung the archetypal image appears. In the apophatic the concept appears. In all three cases, something is born that immediately captures consciousness. It's not a mistake yet. It's a possibility. Consciousness is attracted.

## Second movement: Identification

Here the real poison appears. The wayfarer says:

"It's a mango."

The ego says:

"This success is me."

The religious mind says:

"This concept describes God."

The mechanism is identical. Consciousness is identified with an image. He no longer contemplates it. He owns it. Or he believes he owns it.

## Third movement: The crisis

In Jātaka the poison acts. In Jung the Shadow appears. In apophatic all images of God collapse. This moment is often interpreted as negative. In reality, it is the beginning of the transformation. It is not the symbol that fails. It is identification.

## Fourth movement: Emptying

The Bodhisatta saves the one who expels the poison. Jung speaks of the integration of the Shadow. The apophatic speaks of spoliation. They are three languages. However, they describe the same gesture. Drop.

## Fifth movement: Silence

And this is where the essay can offer something new.

Buddhism does not conclude by saying:

"Now you have the truth."

Jung does not conclude by saying:

"Now you know the Self definitely."

The apophatic does not conclude by saying:

"Now you know who God is."

All three stop the language. The point of arrival is not a new concept. It is a new quality of the gaze.

## The video as an initiatory experience

Video: https://youtu.be/-5JxCDFrohk

At this point, the way of commenting on the video also changes.

I would no longer say:

"The eight images represent..."

I would say instead:

"The eight images do not illustrate the story."

They make it happen inside the viewer.

Slide 1 - The viewer desires the fruit.

Slide 2 - The viewer recognizes his own Persona.

Slide 3 - The viewer meets the Old Sage.

Slide 4 - The viewer feels the seduction.

Slide 5- The viewer sees his own image cracking.

Slide 6 - The viewer meets his own Shadow.

Slide 7 - The viewer witnesses the collapse of the construction of the Ego.

Slide 8 - The viewer is left with nothing to grasp.

And this is where the video ends. Not because the story is over. But because the reader's work begins.

## The video: an initiatory journey in eight images

The video not as a "sequence of slides", but as an experience:

1. Desire is born.

2. The image seduces.

3. The guide appears.

4. The ego chooses.

5. The illusion cracks.

6. The Shadow emerges.

7. The Tower falls.

8. Silence remains.

The key phrase:

"The video does not tell the story of the collapse of a tower. It tells the moment when a consciousness stops inhabiting an imaginary construction."

## A possible final synthesis

The Kimpakka Jātaka teaches that the fruit is not poisonous because it deceives the senses; Jung shows that it becomes poisonous when the ego identifies with it; the apophatic tradition finally reveals that the poison disappears the moment no image claims to replace the Mystery.

This could become the hermeneutical key to the entire volume "Jātaka 85–96: From the Poisoned Apple to the Oil of Awareness".

## A new method of reading

Each chapter can be read as a succession of living symbols, not of disciplines.

Do not:

The Jātaka says...

Jung says...

The apophatic says...

But:

The fruit.

And then the fruit is observed from three perspectives at the same time.

## The fruit

The voice of the Jātaka

The fruit of the Kimpakka is not simply poisonous. It is indistinguishable from a ripe mango. The deception does not consist in his appearance, but in the haste with which the traveler decides to know what he sees. The mistake precedes the bite. It is born in the gaze.

Jung's voice

Each archetype has an attractive force. When the ego encounters an image capable of promising completeness, it tends to identify with it. The fruit represents this fascination. It is not the object that possesses the subject. It is the subject who projects his own lack into it.

The apophatic voice

Every shape is true as long as it remains transparent. It becomes idolatry when it claims to exhaust what it represents. The fruit is not just an object. It is every image that ceases to be a window and claims to become the sky.

Resonance

The fruit is therefore neither a simple poison, nor only an archetype, nor exclusively a theological symbol. It is the point at which desire meets form and forgets that form never coincides with reality.

## The forest

Even the forest is no longer just a place. It becomes a phenomenological space.

Jātaka

The forest is the place of trial.

Jung

The forest is the unconscious still unexplored.

Apophatic

The forest is the region where language progressively loses its dominance.

Resonance

Entering the forest means accepting that you can no longer live only on maps.

## The Caretaker

In the contemporary story, Elias is much more than a character. It could become one of the central symbols of the entire essay.

Jātaka

The guide indicates the danger.

Jung

The Old Sage guards the direction of the individuation process.

Apophatic

The authentic teacher does not lead to himself. It leads beyond any master.

Resonance

True guidance is no substitute for the journey. It makes it possible to see.

## The poison

Here the three traditions almost overlap.

Jātaka

The poison destroys the body.

Jung

Identification poisons the psyche.

Apophatic

Attachment to the concept obscures the Mystery.

Resonance

Every poison is born when something relative claims to become absolute.

## Silence

Silence is not the ending. It is the last symbol. But it is a particular symbol. He is the only one who dissolves all the others.

Jātaka

The Bodhisatta stops talking. Only discernment remains.

Jung

The Self does not coincide with any definitive image. Every authentic symbol remains open.

Apophatic

Silence is not the absence of meaning. It is the place where no meaning can be possessed anymore.

Resonance

When the symbol is no longer held, it continues to operate. Not as an answer. As a presence.

## Resonance

When the symbol becomes a mirror

Each authentic symbol goes through three moments.

At first it is observed.

Later it is understood.

Finally, almost without us realizing it, he begins to observe us.

This is the moment of resonance.

As long as the Kimpakka Jātaka remains only an ancient Buddhist tale, it belongs to history. When it becomes the language with which we recognize our desires, our illusions and our fears, then it belongs to our lives.

The same happens with Jung. The Shadow is not just a concept of analytical psychology. It is the face we meet every time a crisis cracks the image we had built of ourselves.

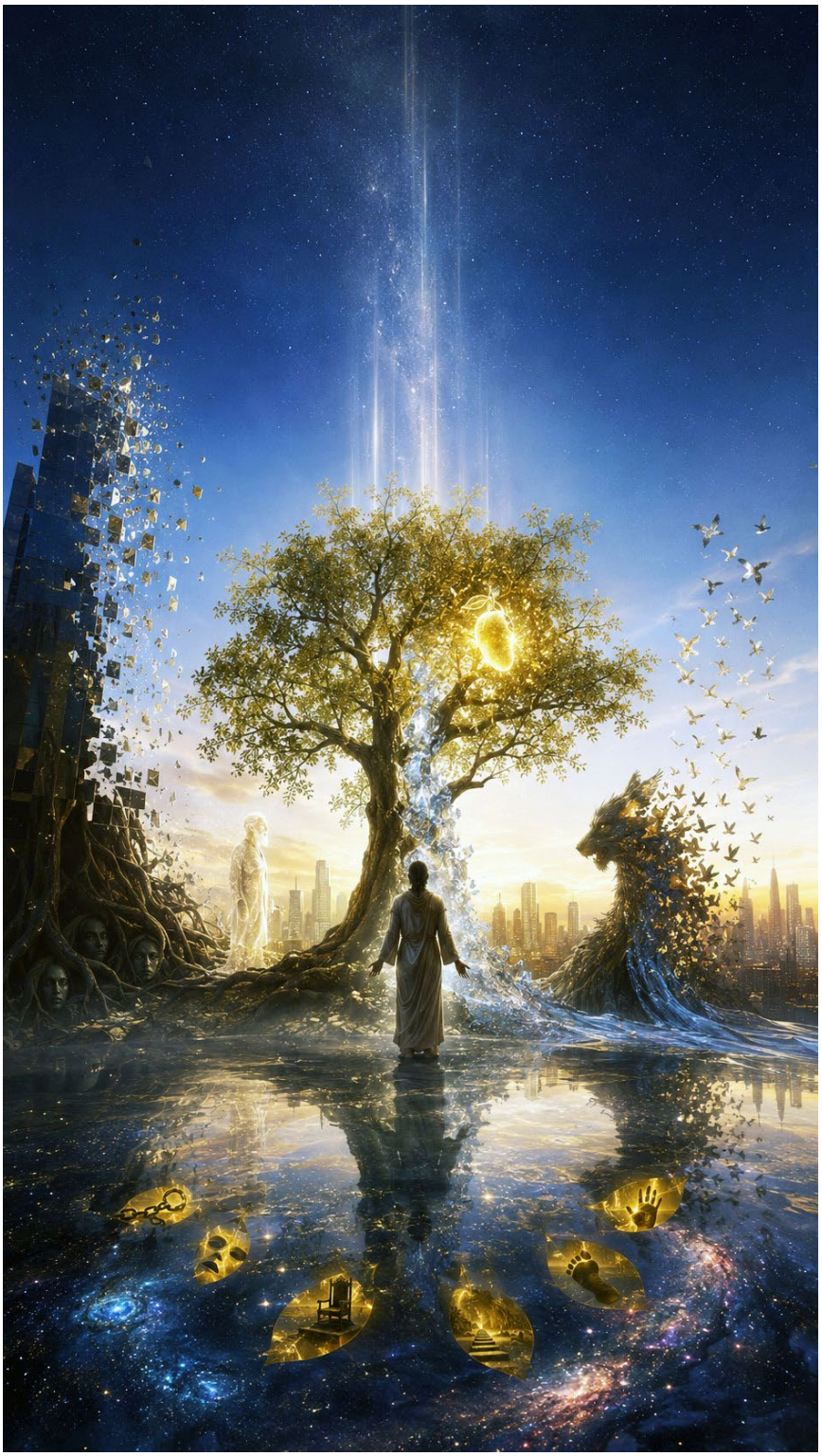
And the same happens with the apophatic pathway. Silence is not the end point of the speech. It is the place where discourse stops separating the subject from the experience. Perhaps this is precisely the deepest convergence of the three perspectives.

They do not ask first of all to change the world. They ask to transform the way we inhabit it. The fruit continues to grow. The towers continue to be built. The guides continue to speak in a soft voice. The Shadows continue to wait for the opportune moment to manifest. None of this disappears. What changes is the quality of the look. And it is here that the symbol does its work. It does not eliminate desire. It makes it transparent. It does not destroy identity. It makes it permeable. It does not erase language. It returns him to the silence from which he was born.

Perhaps the true teaching of Kimpakka Jātaka is not to learn to recognize a poisonous fruit. It consists in learning to recognize the exact moment in which we begin to ask an image, a role, a success, a conviction or even a spiritual search what no finite reality can ever give us. In that instant the possibility of discernment arises. And it is precisely there that the Buddha invites us to stop. Jung invites us to listen. The apophatic way invites us to let go. Three invitations. A single gesture. Open your hand. Not to give up the world. But to

inhabit the world without being possessed by it. Perhaps, then, the most precious fruit is not the one we harvest. It is what we can finally contemplate without the need to grasp it. And it is at that moment that the story really ends. Not because all the questions have been answered. But because the reader himself has become part of the symbol. Kimpakka no longer grows only in the forest of ancient India. It grows every day, silently, in the landscape of our consciousness. It is up to us to decide whether to eat its fruit or to pause, even if only for a moment, in front of its beauty, letting silence — and not desire — show us the way.

## Epilogue



This image no longer tells a story; invites us to become aware.

Overall impression

The first sensation is that of a peace that is born after a long transformation. There is no heroic emphasis. There is no winner. There is no longer conflict. Everything seems to have slowly transfigured. The final emotional impression should not be victory. It should feel like recognition. The viewer gradually understands that the journey is over because there is nowhere to go.

The composition

The structure is surprisingly stable. The tree occupies the center like a true Axis Mundi. The human figure becomes the lower vertical axis. The light beam extends this line towards the sky. Thus a gigantic invisible column is created:

Earth → Man → Tree → Light → Heaven.

This verticality immediately produces a sense of contemplation. Nothing distracts from the main axis.

The top blank

One of the best elements is the large sky that mirrors negative space. The sky occupies almost half of the composition. This void performs an apophatic function. It doesn't represent something. It represents what cannot be represented. It is a visual silence. In sacred art, emptiness is often more eloquent than the object. This is exactly what happens here.

The human figure

The figure is extremely successful. View from behind. Small. Neutral. Devoid of individuality. He doesn't seem like a protagonist. He looks like a witness. This is fundamental. In Western iconography, the protagonist tends to dominate the image. Here the opposite happens. The human being has finally downsized. He does not observe to possess. Just observe. Open hands are perhaps the most psychologically important detail. They don't ask. They don't grab. They do not indicate. They do not pray. They remain open. It's the perfect picture of Buddhist non-attachment. Jung would also have spoken here of the end of the will of the Ego.

The tree

The tree is the true symbolic protagonist. It's magnificent. Massive. Ancient. Stable. The fusion of bark and crystal is very well rendered. The crystal immediately suggests:

Transparency

consciousness

transformation of matter

inner light

It is no longer just a tree. It is now a symbol of the Self.

The fruit

This is perhaps the most interesting element. It is not completely transparent. It's still bright. However, it no longer appears seductive. The viewer does not want to take it. He contemplates it. In the Kimpakka Jātaka the fruit represents the illusion of appearance. Here, however, it represents the understanding of appearance. The object remained. The subject has changed.

The Caretaker

It is an almost invisible presence. The old man no longer teaches. He does not warn. He doesn't speak. It exists. It has become pure presence. This is a typically apophatic transformation. The perfect teacher is the one who no longer has to explain.

The Dark Tower

The dissolving tower is probably the most obvious Jungian symbol. It does not explode. It does not collapse violently. It disintegrates into light. The ego is not destroyed. It is made transparent. It is the difference between psychological death and individuation.

Many spiritual images show the destruction of the ego. This shows its spontaneous dissolution.

The animal

The big cat is no longer threatening. Its body slowly transforms into flocks of birds. The tail becomes water. Here two very powerful symbolisms coexist. Birds represent sublimation. Water represents the now reconciled unconscious. The Shadow Broker has not been eliminated. It has changed shape. Exactly as Jung writes. The integrated Shadow becomes energy.

The cosmic reflection

This is perhaps the most poetic point: water does not reflect man but the cosmos. Normally the lake reflects the subject. Here he reflects the universe. This means: authentic identity is not personal. It's cosmic. It is probably the closest image to the Buddhist notion of anattā (no-self), where the individual self ceases to be the center of experience without nullifying conscious presence.

The symbolic leaves

They are almost invisible. Many artists would make these symbols didactic. Here, however, you have to look for them. We find:

The broken chain

The mask

The throne

The staircase

The hand

The imprint

They are now fossilized archetypes. They no longer tell. They remember.

Colors

They dominate:

Gold

midnight blue

indigo

deep grays

Gold never appears triumphant. It is a silent gold. Very close to Byzantine icons. Blue, on the other hand, introduces a sense of infinity. The chromatic balance avoids any spiritual rhetoric.

The light

Light does not have a source. He descends. But from where? We don't know. The light is not explained. It simply happens.

Jungian reading

The image can be interpreted as a complete map of the individuation.

The tower is the Person who dissolves.

The feline represents the integrated Shadow.

The keeper is the Wise Old Man.

The crystalline tree is the Self.

The fruit is the now recognized projection.

Cosmic water is the transformed unconscious.

The human figure is the ego that has given up control.

The entire archetypal system converges towards a single center.

The Buddhist Reading

From the Buddhist point of view, the image tells the passage:

from craving,

to discernment,

transparency.

The mango was not destroyed. Temptation is not suppressed. It simply loses consistency. It is an extremely effective visualization of emptiness (śūnyatā): phenomena continue to appear, but they are no longer mistaken for ultimate realities.

Apophatic reading

Here the image reaches perhaps its highest level. Every symbol is present. But no symbol claims to be definitive. The tower dissolves. The fruit is lightened. The animal becomes birds. The caretaker becomes light. Even the reflection no longer reflects man. Everything tends towards transparency. The entire composition seems to say:

Everything that guided you was necessary.

But now even those symbols can be let go.

This is exactly the heart of the apophatic tradition: even the images that lead to the truth, once they have fulfilled their task, become transparent.

Enhanced image

1. The fruit is more immaterial, with a progressive dissolution into particles of light, so as to perceive it as a vanishing projection.

2. Greater transition of the landscape from the forest to the city to pure emptiness, making the disappearance of the distinction between the inner and outer world more evident.

3. Further reduction of the caretaker's visibility, almost to the limit of the imperceptible, so that he is perceived as a presence rather than as a figure.

4. Almost completely elimination of the reflection of the figure in the water, letting the cosmos completely occupy the surface, in perfect coherence with the theme of overcoming individual identity.

5. Slight increase in the void at the top, so that the silence of the sky becomes even more dominant.

Overall, these images don't just work as an illustration of the Kimpakka Jātaka: they function as a true icon of recognition. The center is no longer the mango, the tree, the tower or the traveler. The real subject is transparency itself. All the symbols remain present, but no one holds their gaze anymore. The image leads the contemplator beyond the narrative, beyond the archetypes and, finally, beyond the very necessity of symbols. In this sense, they conclude the entire spiritual journey in a coherent way: not with a triumph, but with a silent recognition.

## One last proposal - "Practice of the gaze"

The "Practice of the Gaze" is not an exercise in meditation in the technical sense of the term, nor a psychological commentary, but a page of a few lines that invites the reader to verify the symbol in his or her own daily experience.

In the Kimpakka Jātaka:

Gaze practice

Today, observe what you desire with greater intensity. Don't ask yourself if it's right or wrong. Just ask yourself: what does it promise? Then he stays a few moments with that promise, without grasping it and without rejecting it. Perhaps the first discernment is born precisely in the space that separates desire from gesture.

## Conclusion – The poison of appearance and the silence of discernment

The Kimpakka Jātaka is, on the surface, one of the simplest moral tales in the entire collection. Some travelers, ignoring the guide's warning, eat a beautiful fruit that resembles a ripe mango. Its color is inviting, the scent irresistible, the taste sweet. Only when the poison begins to destroy their bodies do they understand that appearances can perfectly imitate the truth.

Yet the story is not really about botany, nor about food prudence.

Talk about the mind.

The poisonous fruit is anything that promises immediate happiness without requiring inner transformation. It is every success that feeds the ego instead of the conscience; any ideology that offers definitive answers; every image that seduces even before being understood; every identity that claims to define what we are.

The poison does not reside in the object. It is born in the desire that transforms it into salvation.

That is why the Bodhisatta does not forbid the fruit. He warns. It invites us to observe. He asks to suspend the impulse. True guidance never replaces the discernment of the disciple; it gives him back the responsibility of his own gaze.

In this perspective, the Jātaka anticipates one of the central themes of Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology.

The ego is naturally attracted to that which confirms it. He looks for grandiose images of himself, reassuring roles, absolute belonging, recognitions that seem to fill the sense of lack. But it is precisely these images that can turn into what Jung called psychic inflation: the moment in which the Ego identifies itself with something greater than itself and stops seeing its limits.

The fruit of the Kimpakka is precisely this inflation. It's not bad because it's beautiful. It is dangerous because it is mistaken for reality. Appearance is not the enemy. It becomes so when it replaces seeing.

Marco Tarenti's entire story was built around this point. The Tower of Prosperity does not only represent economic power or social success. It is the image of the personality built by the Ego: an apparently solid structure, capable of reflecting the whole world, but based on unconscious desires. Its collapse is not a moral punishment; it is the dissolution of a perspective.

Poison does not destroy the person. It destroys the illusion that the person coincides with his or her mask. It is here that the Buddhist and Jungian readings touch each other deeply. Jung would say that the Shadow breaks in when the Ego can no longer sustain its ideal image. The Buddha would say that pain arises from attachment.

Both, although speaking different languages, indicate the same movement: what we believed to be ourselves must crack so that a broader consciousness can emerge. But the Kimpakka Jātaka also suggests something that goes beyond both perspectives. His wisdom is surprisingly apophatic. The text does not tell us what the "true fruit" is. It does not propose a good object to replace the bad one. It does not simply invite you to choose better. It invites you to look.

The question is not:

"What fruit should I eat?"

but

"Who is he who desires to eat it so intensely?"

When this question becomes real, the story completely changes meaning. The problem is no longer the mango. The problem is hunger. And it is precisely here that the text reaches an extraordinary spiritual depth. Whenever we believe that something, outside of us, can finally complete us, we are already tasting the poison of Kimpakka.

It can be money.

Of prestige.

Of romantic love.

Of professional success.

Of moral perfection.

Even of spiritual research.

Even the Dharma can become a poisonous fruit if it is transformed into a possession of the ego.

For this reason, the story ends without triumph. There is no winner. There is no defeated enemy. There is no better identity that replaces the previous one. There is only a progressive emptying of illusions.

In this silence emerges one of the most radical intuitions of the entire collection of Jātakas: awakening does not consist in adding something to our experience, but in ceasing to attribute reality to that which lives only on our craving.

From this point of view, the Kimpakka Jātaka constitutes the gateway to the entire first level of the path. The stories that follow will no longer simply speak of poisonous fruits. They will show how appearance takes on ever new forms: wealth, power, fear, desire, prestige, security, control, even virtue. Each Jātaka will add a new mask. Each mask will invite a more subtle discernment. Until the reader understands that the real deception is never the object observed, but the observer who forgets to observe himself. And this is perhaps the most precious gift of the Kimpakka Jātaka. It does not teach us to distrust the world. It teaches us to be wary of our own haste. Because poison almost always enters in the same way. Not through what is ugly. But through what we wish too quickly to call good. And when desire finally slows down, when the gaze gives up possessing what it contemplates, then the fruit loses its spell. Not because it has changed. But because the one who looks at it has changed. Perhaps authentic discernment is born right here. The moment we no longer need to decide immediately whether something is to be grasped or rejected. At the moment when we can pause before the mystery without consuming it.

Like the Bodhisatta in front of the Kimpakka tree.

Like Jung in front of the symbols of the unconscious.

Like the mystic before the Silence that no name can contain.